

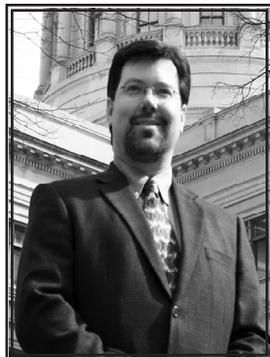
CHURCH NEWS

AN INSPIRING MOMENT WITH

Dr. Ron Bigalke

God's Work among the Nations and in Our Lives

Lately, many people are asking questions with regard to the work of God among the nations of this world. God is indeed active in the affairs of humanity and He is absolutely sovereign to accomplish his eternal decrees. Throughout the Bible, it is apparent that the people of God have always



struggled with living holy and godly lives in the midst of a very perverse and wicked world. God's eternal decree has always been to call a people—holy and separate—unto himself from the world, and that this elect group would be saints ("unique ones") as they live their earthly lives—holy and separate—unto Him. Leviticus is a book that is solely concerned with the holiness of God's people (cf. Lev 19:1-2). God's standard is that his people are to be holy because He is holy (Lev 19:37; 20:7-8; 22:31-32). Nevertheless, God's people have continually struggled with living holy and godly lives in an ungodly world. Oftentimes in the Old Testament, there was not an out-

right rejection of God's standards, but there was a corrupted mixture by those who claimed to be his people. Sometimes they did outright reject God but the majority of the time there was a corrupted mixture in their worship. The exhortation to us in studying God's actions among the nations (in the books of 1—2 Kings, for example) is to beware of deterioration in our spirituality (cf. 1 Pet 1:13-19).

King Amaziah was obedient to God's Word, experienced divine blessing, and then became arrogant regarding his alleged might, rather than recognizing that his blessing was the result of God's grace (2 Kgs 14:18-22). The chapter closes with a summary of the reign of Jeroboam II, which was an exceptionally long reign of forty-one years. Even though Jeroboam experienced a lengthy reign that was politically impressive, the spirituality of the kingdom as characterized by faithlessness and selfishness, was appalling, which can be seen in the books of Hosea and Amos. For these reasons, God brought affliction upon Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. Israel's spiritual declension parallels exactly with the military and political strength

of Assyria: specifically the Omride dynasty (i.e. Omri, king of Israel) of the ninth century BC and the growth of Assyria after the reign of Jeroboam II. Consequently, there is an historical parallel between the spiritual declension of God's people and the period of Assyria's rise to power (which was an historically grisly record of death and torture). The grace of God should never become an opportunity to sin for persistent disobedience displaces the longsuffering of God (cf. Rom 6:1-4; 1 Pet 4:17). The goal and aim in life should be to persist in the goal of the upward call

of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:10-14). El-isha's ministry would not be successful from a temporal perspective, in that there were many godless kings, but God recognized his faithfulness (2 Kgs 13:14). Sometimes (especially in America), we measure success by results rather than evaluating our lives in faithfulness to God's Word. Success and results are not antithetical, but there is a danger in trusting more of results than in the sovereignty of God in relation to the faithful service of His people. Christians are not perfect, but let us pray that when we are aware of our sin we would repent and finish well the work that God has entrusted to us.

SPRINGFIELD MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

"Come. Let us Worship Christ our Lord!"



*Pastor Calvin &
First Lady Gwinnie Hatcher*

New Service Times!

Sunday School 9:45 am

Sunday Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study
7:00 p.m.

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120 South Harris St. Sandersville, GA
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Parts**
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552-6952

WaCo Collision Repair
127 Smith Street, Tennille
478-552-7771

Precision Body Works
311 Poplar Drive
Sandersville
552-7982

ESQUIRE FASHION SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK

If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!
Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering
toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who
guards your life know it?

Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

Proverbs 24:10-12